# THE DISCOURSE OF DISPLACEMENT IN LAWRENCE DURRELL'S THE PIED PIPER OF LOVERS

Eliana Ionoaia
Lecturer, PhD.,University of Bucharest

*Abstract: London – as the center of empire in a still colonial age – is meant to be the home of those born of British parents in the colonies. Yet in Lawrence Durrell's Pied Piper of Lovers (1935) it is perceived as a site of displacement, quite unreal to the eyes of Walsh Clifton who arrives there from the exotic and rural India of his childhood. Durrell himself had experienced this same feeling of displacement when he first came to England to be educated, despite the fact that his parents had been born in India and had never seen England themselves. The expectations of finding a home are not met as the first contact is achieved for either the author or his alter ego, Walsh Clifton. Thus, the possibility that a British subject born in the colonies might find a homeland in England is revealed as doubtful. Walsh Clifton's homecoming to London is revealed to be an instance of displacement exposing the crisis of identity he undergoes. The problematic alienation felt by Clifton in India is displaced from India to England during his move to the homeland. The exacerbated feelings in the homeland reveal that England is perceived as more alien to him than India. 'Englishness' becomes intrinsically linked to the space of home or displacement and to the search for an identity that is spatially and culturally determined.*

*Keywords: displacement, transnational, London, unreal city, thirdspace*

## 1. Introduction

In the 1930s, as England was still at the head of an Empire and as London was seen as the centre of the world, the returning colonialists tended to be thrilled to be back in their homeland. While this might be the case for adult colonialists, their children – born and raised in India – were torn away from the space they had known as home to a homeland they did not know or recognize. In Lawrence Durrell's *Pied Piper of Lovers* this situation is exacerbated by the fact that the protagonist, Walsh Clifton, bears India not only in his mind, but also in his blood as he is the offspring of an English father and an Indian mother. While his racial markings are close to non-existent – with only his eyes betraying his Indian ancestry – at a mental level, as a child, he identifies with the Indian subcontinent and he feels sadness and insecurity as he is removed from the only home he has known in order to receive an English education. The novel also reveals the adult colonialist's difficulties in adapting to the homeland in the character of Walsh's aunt Brenda. Nevertheless, the focus in this paper is on Walsh's perception of India as home and of England as a space of displacement.

The novel may be interpreted in transnational key even though this theory is far more recent. The protagonist, Walsh Clifton, was born of a union between an Indian mother and an English father. He was born in India and brought to England to be educated. He felt Indian more than English, yet the culture he assimilated through education was the English one. He identified with India as his homeland, yet once in England he remained there. London was an inimical and stifling place in terms of physical and mental perception. Walsh's education allowed him, on his return to London, to perceive the city from a third perspective, the social one. Azade Seyhan discusses the idea of hybridity and criticizes the tendency to forgo the social spaces "where cultures interact and literature as an institution of cultural memory intervenes." (Seyhan 5) If the mental and physical representations of London still classify it as unreal at the time of Walsh's return to the city, his education allows him to perceive the



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

social interactions he enjoys with Turnbull's acquaintances and with Ruth through the lens provided by culture. Despite the protagonist's failure in engaging in an intercultural or bi-cultural dialogue, the transnational interpretation of London as an unreal space is possible if Lefebvre and Soja's theories of the thirdspace are employed, considering the physical, mental and social dimensions of London for Walsh Clifton.

## 2. Discourse of Displacement – Lawrence Durrell's Rejection of England

Lawrence Durrell's birth in India from an English father and Anglo-Indian mother and the time he spent in India until he was eleven years old, marked his identification with the colony, rather than with the colonial centre of England. He felt that he was under the "shadow of the myth of the British raj" (Green 23 qtd. in Gifford xix), which led him not to feel at home in England and dispute British colonialism. In his "Introduction" to *From the Elephant's Back* (2015), Gifford reveals that Durrell had many homes, but that the two that haunted him were India and England. Gifford considers Lawrence Durrell's childhood spent in the former and his adolescence spent in the latter, which are dramatized in his first novel *ThePied Piper of Lovers* (1935) with its Anglo-Indian protagonist and pondered in Durrell's 1981 speech at the Centre Pompidou, published as an essay a year later:

> "his childhood as a subject of empire in relief against the homelessness he felt when he was returned to the centre of empire: his Indian childhood and his adolescent migration to London. This theme opens Durrell's first major work of prose fiction, his 1935 novel *Pied Piper of Lovers*, and its importance to his thinking brought about its autobiographical return in this 1982 essay." (Gifford xxiv)

Wrenched from India, a land he had known as home, Durrell was, nevertheless, educated at home to consider England as a "distant paradise" on which the family "depended morally" and to believe in the English superiority: "It was known as "Home" which was very touching. I knew that it was better than heaven, because I had been told that everything British was better than everything foreign." (Durrell 2015: 6) Given his family's belief in the superiority of the British, and their love of India and the colonial service, "it was a formula for cultural confusion which would have distinct repercussions for Durrell in terms of his relations with the notion of 'orientalism' and the siting of 'images of the Other'." (Pine 21) Consequently, he regarded himself as an outsider in England and he felt that in many ways India was superior to the centre of Empire.

Identifying with India made Durrell and his family inferior to the British who could claim the British Isles as their home, and turned them into the Other. Thus, the journey to Britain, for his education, turned into a sort of 'exile'. Being sent to school in England was, in a manner of speaking, seen as being chosen for a greater destiny, but aside from being good at sports (immortalized through Walsh Clifton), which saved him from bullying, Durrell did not enjoy his time at school. One of the professors, who supported his ambition to become a writer by subscribing to *Le Monde*, finds a home within the pages of *ThePied Piper of Lovers*. The advantage offered by the English education was linked to language and literature which became "his passport". (Durrell 2015: 6) His father's ambition for Lawrence Durrell, that of moving beyond the *petite bourgeoisie*, was not to be realized since he was an indifferent student and did not pass his university examination.

His reaction to England and his lack of adaptation to the educational environment there speak to Durrell's feelings of alienation and displacement in the geographical space that he had become convinced – as a result of his father's rhetoric – was supposed to be his home. Nevertheless, his experience of England was one lacking in comfort; in fact, he described the lifestyle of the English as "the English death." (International Lawrence Durrell Society, website) According to the biography page on the International Lawrence Durrell Society website, for Durrell, life in England was bleak: "English life is really like an autopsy. It is so, so dreary." Thus, he felt deeply alienated and did not adjust to life in his supposed homeland,



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

England. On the other hand, even later in life, he always remembered India fondly, despite the fact that he did not return there: "Some part of India has always been at the core of my being, and now, at the age of seventy-one, I seem to have spent my life trying to get back to my roots…India has always been in my heart…" (Morrison 12) Therefore, despite the ideas his father tried to inculcate in him in terms of English superiority and to his belonging to this distant land, Durrell was ambivalent about the country he had been urged to see as his homeland.

Due to his experiences of India as home and England as a foreign land, which he was nevertheless supposed to treat as a paragon of superiority, Durrell's experiences are those of "the mindscape of the 'extraterritorial'" (Pine 24) and he embodies them in the "literature of exile" and focuses on the "problem of a lost centre". (Pine 24) In his works, Lawrence Durrell addressed the self as outsider and the notion of permanent exile – thus, he revealed the issues that his generation of colonials had to confront, such as the fact that the journey home, was in fact "a voyage out" and that the discovery of England as home was a quest towards discovering one's identity. (Pine 26) India had marked Durrell due to the passivity and the communion with nature that seemed to be at the centre of things, but his schooling had also revealed to him the typical Victorian values of progress and the power of science; therefore, he was not "resigned to the behaviour of nature" and his education resisted passivity and he felt that: "We were too cocksure about the matter, and gloried in the perfections of Victorian science." (Durrell 2015: 4) His connection to the motherland and the fatherland placed him in an untenable position of not being able to identify with either fully.

Lawrence Durrell's family was Anglo-Indian going back two generations on his mother's side, having come to India before the Indian Mutiny, but in the tradition of colonials his parents aspired to have their children educated in the homeland of England, which they had not seen: "neither my father nor my mother had seen England or experienced the English at home. We were virgin." (Durrell 2015: 2) His family had been dedicated to colonial service for generations, turning the East into a career. (Pine 21) The family had taken up the flag of progress and immersed themselves in a life in the East, with various of its members belonging to the police, military, functionaries and bureaucrats, being made up of "real Anglo-Indians" who "spoke the languages of the places". (Durrell 2015: 3) The discourse of colonial superiority and of progress through the education and management of the resources of the colony was eagerly adopted by Lawrence Durrell's family, and, as such, in his childhood he had been imbued with the same ideals.

However, his father's teachings and beliefs came into conflict with Durrell's own experience of England, once he left India. The Indian geographical space that Durrell himself perceived as home and his father's "mental landscape of 'home', an England which at that stage he had never seen, but whose values and significance were part of the nineteenth-century colonial baggage" (Pine 22) created a conflict that was translated into a discourse of displacement which permeated Durrell's literary works. The two conflicting views vied for ascendance, each holding sway in different periods of Durrell's life. Moreover, given that his father's ideas about England were received rather than experienced, this further complicated Lawrence Durrell's relationship to the idea of empire and homeland; in fact, it placed him on shaky ground, an uncertain stance whose instability was furthered by the earthquake provided by his move the England and his attempt to articulate a view of England as home.

Later in life, after he had worked as a diplomat for British embassies and for the British Council in various countries, Durrell's relationship to England was still fraught with conflict. As he lamented in letters to his friend, the American writer Henry Miller: "I was born in India. Went to school there—under the Himalayas. The most wonderful memories, a brief dream of Tibet until I was eleven. Then that mean, shabby little island up there wrung my guts out of me and tried to destroy anything singular and unique in me." (Macniven 51)



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

He retained pleasant memories of India, while he felt that England represented some sort of threat to his mental stability and to his identity, as the English lifestyle was meant to create conformity and uniformity. This ambivalence towards England culminated in what Durrell felt as England's rejection of him as a result of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act.

In 2002, it was revealed that as a result of this piece of legislation which aimed at "reducing immigration to Britain from India, Pakistan and the West Indies" (Ezard, *The Guardian* website), Lawrence Durrell was refused British citizenship. Despite holding a British passport, given that Durrell had not been notified that he had to "register as a British citizen under the 1962 Commonwealth Immigration Act" (Ezard, *The Guardian* website), the writer had to apply for entry permits each time he visited England, which he did, dutifully. England claims Lawrence Durrell as her own, yet the relationship is fraught with rejection, alienation and displacement for the author who spent little time in England. On the other hand, despite not returning to India, Durrell retained a childish wistfulness regarding the colony where he spent his happy childhood.

### 3. Literary Influences – Kipling and Orwell

Durrell was heavily influenced by literary works of Empire such as Kipling's *Kim* and Orwell's "Shooting an Elephant". On the one hand, he identified with Rudyard Kipling and George Orwell, who were both born on the Indian subcontinent and sent to England for their education. On the other hand, his own experiences in both India and England, he felt, were rendered by some of the writings of these authors. Nevertheless, his attitude towards both geographical space and mental landscape differs from those of Kipling and Orwell.

In Orwell's case, his writings were always to some degree focused on relations of power. This is particularly relevant for *1984*, but no less true for his short story "Shooting an Elephant". Orwell's interest in politics and ideologies is salient in most of his works. For Orwell, in "Shooting an Elephant", the elephant becomes an embodiment of the dying empire: "For Orwell, the relations among the colonials, the Indians, and the elephant are antagonistic and inextricably caught in dynamics of power, control, and social position." (Gifford xxv) Thus, the colonials are the superior force, meant to replace the Indians and the elephant, who are unlikely to survive in a world in which the colonials hold power. For Durrell, the elephant in his story is the childhood companion that teaches him the wisdom of his adopted homeland: "But the proverb says that whoever sees the world from the back of an elephant learns the secrets of the jungle and becomes a seer. I had to be content to become a poet." (Durrell 2015: 3-4) The elephant becomes a symbol of Indian philosophy, of tolerance and peacefulness. Thus, in Durrell's story, political readings of the elephant and the boy are forestalled: "both resist the politics of the conflicting governmental bodies and material conditions in which they find themselves constituted as subjects." (Gifford xxvi) To sum up, Durrell's attitude towards India is set in opposition to that of Orwell, yet he makes use of an earlier literary work so as to show the difference in his stance; thus, he transforms literature into an institution of cultural memory.

Durrell's childhood in India marked him through experiences, teachings and readings. One of the texts Lawrence Durrell enjoyed as a child was Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, with whose eponymous protagonist he identified growing up and under whose shadow he placed his own protagonist in *The Pied Piper of Lovers*. However, it was also this time that fostered his "career of alienation from Britain" (Gifford xxvi) and his reaction of either rejection (England), acceptance (France) or enthusiasm (Greece) towards a succession of homelands and his life of questing for a new home. Lawrence Durrell felt that India and England had marked him with a "juxtaposition of two types of consciousness". (Durrell 2015: 1-2) On the one hand, Durrell identified himself as "a colonial, an Anglo-Indian"; on the other hand, he considered that in speaking English and writing in English, he was assuming an identity that felt alien to him: "at times I felt like a white negro thinking in pidgin!". (Durrell 2015: 1-2)



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

He assigned a greater importance to India as homeland, stating that "One part of me has remained a child of the jungle" and that his first language was Hindi. (Durrell 2015: 2) Conversely, he felt that his family's English roots were of a lesser importance.

As he started writing, Lawrence Durrell realized that in opposition to his literary forefathers of the nineteenth century who had the stable Victorian world to fall back on, his own world was one characterized by instability, unsettling his beliefs: "What a gap stretched between *Robinson Crusoe*—the last novel of human isolation without loss of identity, without alienation—and Kafka's *Castle* in which the new sensibility had been mercilessly exposed to view." (Durrell 2015: 7) Feeling that the "stable ego of fiction had disintegrated" and that the absolute objective Truth they had been taught to believe in had been revealed to be relative and provisional, he turned to Indian philosophy to better understand the notion of matter as illusion. (Durrell 2015: 7) Lawrence's 1981 lecture simplified the way he had understood the world as a youth, but he had, at the time, felt the dangers and inherent conflict present in the notion of two cultures, since he himself belonged to both the European and the Indian traditions. (Durrell 2015: 7) The way he attempted to reconcile these two traditions / cultures was through the classical frame of the ancient Greeks, whom he believed indebted to the Indian school of philosophy. (Durrell 2015: 8)

Durrell saw himself as a child of *Kim* (Pine 24) in the sense that he was influenced by Kipling's book and that he followed in the protagonist's footsteps. He lived Kim's life, he inhabited a world that was "caste-conscious, its Englishness pervaded by the visions and behaviour of the subcontinent". (Pine 22) This same consciousness of an Englishness that was marked by the cultural, geographical and mental space of India pervaded not only Durrell's life, but also his literary works and the life of his protagonist, Walsh Clifton, in *ThePied Piper of Lovers*. In some sense, his first novel was a direct literary inheritor of Rudyard Kipling's novel. Additionally, Durrell regarded himself as "a colonial who disappointed the colonial system, a writer for ever ill-at-ease with ideas of class and conformity". (Pine 22) Since England was meant to be the fatherland, just like a stern father, it withheld its approval of Durrell. Presumably, this is how Durrell felt; however, he was not so generous as to wholeheartedly approve of England, either. Given the imagology he had imbued from his father, he ought to have felt that England was by far the superior nation and to have been eager to assume an English national identity. By identifying more with India, he failed a test he did not even know he was taking – perhaps unconsciously, when he was sent to England to be educated; but I would suggest, very much consciously, when the traumatic and alienating move to England was re-lived and repeated in creating Walsh Clifton as an Anglo-Indian, when writing *ThePied Piper of Lovers*.

**4. Conflicting Cultures in *ThePied Piper of Lovers***

Walsh, who is the product of two cultures, does not reconcile his two sides. In the novel, the two cultures collide and create turmoil in the young boy's mind and heart. Growing up and going to school do not provide a mitigating influence; the conflict is muted, but he still feels displaced and he does not feel that he belongs in England or for the most part that he is English. In fact, Walsh deals with the stage of rupture and rootlessness of the transnational displacement from the only homeland he has known. Nevertheless, the homeland provided by India is far from perfect and the domestic space of home is problematic as well. His mother's death in childbirth makes the space of home imperfect since the mother is missing. The father's presence is conditioned by the work he does for the Empire and only with his paternal aunt's arrival does Walsh enjoy a maternal presence in the home. The grandmother's arrival on the other hand further disrupts his home life. Thus, the term home refers to both the nation and the domestic sphere in which Walsh grows up. It is a lived space and it becomes a spatial imaginary once he sets sail towards England. Although it



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

is a private space it is engaged in the politics of belonging and becomes a site of resistance for Walsh who is unable to identify with England as homeland.

In India, as he is informed that he would be going home to England to be educated the word 'home' acquires new valences. For the child India was a home and England a foreign land with which he had difficulties identifying: "Walsh found it a peculiarly inspiring word, but applied to England it meant less than nothing." (Durrell 2008: 55) On the ship taking him to Dover, Walsh engages in conversation with an Indian *ayah* and he tells her he too is from the hills, siding and identifying with her and with India as home, as he utters these words. This imaginative geography of home is challenged by the ayah's lack of identification with him in return. Feeling "sick with an undefined regret" (Durrell 2008: 111), Walsh tries to find a common denominator with the one person he sees aboard with whom he feels he can identify. But the *ayah* rejects his claim on India as home: "she seemed to regard him as yet another of the alien race with whom she had nothing in common save the coincidence of a common dwelling; a birth-place and a country for her, for him no more than a temporary house." (Durrell 2008: 111) Instead of a home, the *ayah* believes that for Walsh India was only a dwelling, a temporary house. She contests his right to call India home or motherland. This rejection is crucial for Walsh since it makes him come to terms with the fact that India is behind him. Nevertheless, he is not prepared to accept a new home in his heart: he "tried to feel really glad that he was within sight of such an exciting place as England, but the mood was unreal." (Durrell 2008: 111) From England as unreal, Walsh moves to feeling that London is unreal.

One caveat should be offered here – for Walsh the opposition between country and city is quite important – he feels at home in the country even in England, and on the holidays taken with his aunt, in the country or near the sea he feels free and happy once again, for the first time since arriving in England. It is the city that he finds stifling and uninspiring. Thus, Raymond Williams's discussion of the connotations accumulated by country – as nation and part of the land, peace, virtue, innocence or backwardness, ignorance and limitation, and by city – civilization, learning, communication, light or noise, worldliness and ambition (1) is to be kept in mind with the meanings accrued in terms of an interpretation of Walsh's character.

The perception of London as unreal comes from the fact that for Walsh it is "a different dimension, a different space" to which he was not accustomed: "How cramped England was!" (Durrell 2008: 112) The open spaces of India are thus contrasted to the small and closed spaces he encounters in this urban space. The first contact with London comes when Walsh and his aunt detrain at Victoria when they both feel "secretly alarmed at the thunderous noise of traffic." (Durrell 2008: 112) The rain makes London seem even less appealing: "How dismal, how squalid London can be under the rain!" (Durrell 2008: 114) The first few days, spent in a hotel near Russell Square, are experienced tentatively, with a nervousness typical of wild animals that find themselves in a new environment: "They pretended to each other that without doubt there was no place quite like London: and that they would rather be here, at the hub of the universe, than anywhere else in the world." (Durrell 2008: 114) The expected feelings of gratitude and awe fail to materialize.

On the other hand, both Walsh and his aunt pretend to be happy to be in London. After all, this was an enviable position and a great place to be – as the hub of the universe. London's salience and its cosmopolitanism, positive qualities though they may be, are, however, not perceived as such by Walsh. Walsh's new pair of shoes – of great quality and beauty to be sure – can function as a metaphor for his feelings about England and London – they might be beautiful, but they do not fit him. During the rainy days, looking out the window, Walsh exclaims: "Biggest village in the world, isn't it?" (Durrell 2008: 115) He is corrected by his aunt Brenda, who tells him this is the biggest city in the world. Thus, the dichotomy between country and city is reiterated. The sounds of the city are indicative of an



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

interpretation of London as hell: "In the silences the street voices would come up to them like dreary blasphemies from some infinitely remote hell." (Durrell 2008: 115) In this first visit to London, Walsh feels frightened and stifled: "what could he say that would adequately express the stifling sense of frustration within him?" (Durrell 2008: 115) His feelings point to the unreal character of London.

On the next page the novel informs us of the expectations heaped upon Walsh – he is to be a man, therefore to refrain from crying, to remember that he is English by birth, therefore to live up to it and to be grateful for the English education provided for him. (Durrell 2008: 116) In addition, he is compared to a savage or an animal that was caught in a trap by a hunter. The readers are also informed that as a savage he tries to emulate what he sees around him and as such is striving towards that education that was to be provided for him: "savage, cast by mischance, as an animal is cast, into the net of the hunter; but if he was a savage, he had that major quality which belongs to the savage, he was imitative. He was abjectly, slavishly intent on becoming English." (Durrell 2008: 116) A direct address from the writer informs the reader of humanity's "peering, inquisitive, spectacled mind (…) forever forced to pry among mysteries, seeking it knows not what, finding a meagre handful of nothing, and being for ever constrained to remember the awful undiscovered space beyond itself." (Durrell 2008: 116) These words in conjunction with Walsh's impressionable mind are indicative of his destiny throughout the rest of the novel. He is to embark upon a quest to discover his identity – Indian, English or hybrid. For now, the realm of the unknown stretches before him – vast and frightening – with London as an integral part of it.

Walsh's school days provide the education his father had envisioned for him. It is one of the professors at the school, Binhook, who encourages him to read, by lending him books, and his roommate Turnbull who provides a sounding board for the ideas he extracts from his readings. These two characters are Walsh's guides and they assist him in becoming more English and in accepting London as something other than an unreal city. During one of the school holidays he travels with his aunt Brenda to the countryside, where, for the first time since arriving in England, he feels genuinely happy. There he meets Ruth and her brother Gordon who become his guides as well. At fifteen, he learns from Ruth a mantra – No Shame – and from Gordon that he has not become "a damned Englander yet." (Durrell 2008: 150) His school days are over not long after that since his father passes away in India, bitten by a king cobra. He returns to Dulwich, to his aunt's house, but he feels stifled there too. In the end he moves to London and visits Turnbull's friends. But once there he feels "the grey inertia of London, clouded and dismal. (…) There was no space to breathe or move freely. One was hemmed in by the tidy, mean little asphalt avenues." (Durrell 2008: 134) His search for a cheap studio is unsuccessful, therefore he looks for Gannet street where Turnbull's friends were staying, trudging along and

> "reading the names of the roads in that district with thrills of excitement, feeding his mind on the associations they evoked with great men who had lived there. Guildford Street, Russell Square, Museum Street, Goodge Street, Grafton Street, Fitzroy Square, Charlotte Street, Fitzroy Street. He gaped his way along like a child in a toy-shop, occasionally stopping to peer up at a house, letting his bag drop to the pavement." (Durrell 2008: 190)

At the level of the senses, a purely physical level, London remains unreal to Walsh. It is still squalid and dismal. However, at the mental level, the years of English schooling allow his mind to take in associations that were missing before that point, in his prior visit to Russell Square, for instance. The names of the streets in Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury are filled with Blue Plaques nowadays, commemorating those same great men or women whose names were familiar to the protagonist. It is only with meeting his new acquaintances that he moves into the social realm. This is the realm of the thirdspace as expounded by Edward W. Soja.

## 5. Thirdspace



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

Edward W. Soja, in restating Henri Lefebvre's discussion of the firstspace-secondspace-thirdspace trialectic clarifies its meaning. He associates firstspace with perceived /objective /physical /material space or spatial practice, including in it "all forms of direct spatial experiences, which can be empirically measured and also presented in cartographies." (Soja 51) It "embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation." (Lefebvre 33) Secondspace is linked to conceived/subjective/mental/ideal space or representations of space, referring to "the spatial representations, cognitive processes as well as modes of construction, which give rise to the birth of geographical imaginations." (Soja 51) It is "tied to the relations of production and to the 'order' which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to 'frontal' relations." (Lefebvre 33) The thirdspace is created by fusing the first two in the realm of the social and it describes a lived/social space or representational space taking two different valences: "It serves both as a separable field, distinguishable from physical and mental space, also/and as an approximation for an all-encompassing mode of spatial thinking." (Soja 52) It comprises "complex symbolisms, sometimes coded, sometimes not, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art". (Lefebvre 33)

Thus, the scenes Walsh encounters going up the stairs in the building on Gannet Street are perceived as "the whole fantastic scene was imaginary". (Durrell 2008: 193) There's a fight between the landlady and a lady author, a woman dressed in a swimming suit and a towel welcomes him in Robin's flat, then Robin himself receives him while on the close-stool. Walsh feels incredulous and overwhelmed by the situations and people he encounters in London:

> "He was again haunted by the feeling that his presence in these surroundings must be accounted for and explained, but whatever apology that might have risen to his lips was checked by the conviction that in this curious world encounters were not subject to any hard and fast laws of introduction; at least, not if his meeting with the landlady Hotchkiss, and Ulalia Swoop were anything on which to base a judgment. He was either hopelessly provincial, he reflected, or else chance had pitched him into the one house where none but eccentrics lived, and where the behavior dependent on no more than the maniacal whims of these peculiar people." (Durrell 2008: 196)

Despite the less than ideal circumstances in which he makes the acquaintance of Russell, Robin and Isobel, they prove to be kind and amiable and assist him in finding a studio and then even a paying job as a composer of jazz numbers. During their encounters the discussions are always focused on the arts and through those discussions London becomes a thirdspace, no longer dismal and squalid, no longer a kind of hell.

Nevertheless, Walsh's identity crisis is not over yet. His suffering is depicted in a raw manner and his identity is seen as splintered: "I could have been almost anything but what I am – a bundle of splintered mirrors reflecting all the distorted images of other people's minds a bundle of fears and indecisions…" (Durrell 2008: 168) After his first sexual encounter, with Isobel, he learns to accept his own corporeality, yet he continues to question his identity since he is unable to give Isobel a straight answer to her question: "What *are* you?" He thus wonders in response "Vegetable? Mineral? What would you have me be? The son of man!" The rhetorical questions he poses are a non-answer, thus he asks of himself: "What was he? What was anyone? (…) Just another clot of restless lava in flux; a manifestation of a process. I get glibly poetical at this time o'night, Isobel." (Durrell 2008: 226)

In the wake of this encounter, he does not see Isobel again, instead in the British Museum Reading Room immortalized by other writers as well, Walsh encounters Ruth, whom he had not seen in years. This encounter results in a complete transformation. His identity comes together, with Ruth by his side, he decides to work for Garland composing jazz tunes, he focuses on her and on their relationship. At this point, after London has gone



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

through the stages of firstspace, secondspace and thirdspace, it becomes his home – or at least the home of his heart.

**6. Conclusion**

Lawrence Durrell felt like an outsider in England, as a result he lived his life abroad. Having moved from India to England when he was eleven years old, he felt displaced and alienated. These feelings were instilled within *The Pied Piper of Lovers* through the protagonist, Walsh Clifton, who acts as a double for the author. Initially, for Durrell, England was a received image, rather distasteful, which was perceived through the otherness of his Anglo-Indian descent: he "remained unshakeably the child of the Empire" with "a certain missionary vein, a desire to instruct". (Brown 95, 97) The transplanted culture of the Empire had marked his father's perspective on England, and partially his own, yet he despised England and excluded himself from its culture, distrusting England's tendency towards conformity. He felt that as a writer he was more in exile and an outcast in England: "the real foreigner in an Anglo-Saxon society is the artist ... exiles tend to be more British than the British". (Fanchette 41) The reason he felt the need to live abroad was that he felt London and England stood for "decay, decadence and death rather than the inspiring qualities of empire and justice that his father saw in it". (Pine 22) He was never able to reconcile the two opposing conceptions, yet he tried, through his protagonist, Walsh Clifton, in *The Pied Piper of Lovers* to provide a solution, by having him find a home for his heart in England.

Walsh's home of the heart does not represent a perfect mirror to Lawrence Durrell's feelings about England as a home. Although Durrell's early experiences in London are reflected in those of his character, making the novel an autobiographical one, the author adopted the language of literature as a discourse that dealt with his displacement and his feelings of rootlessness, employing works by authors such as Rudyard Kipling and George Orwell, who shared his experience of being born abroad, in the Indian subcontinent and coming to England to be educated. Durrell, however, remained aloof from England and its concerns, as well as from India and its problems, in contrast to the writers he admired. He successively moved from one home to the next, thus, the solution he offers for the protagonist of his novel is not one he engaged with in his own life.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brown, Keith, 'Lawrence Durrell', in *British Writers, supplement 1: Graham Greene to Tom Stoppard*, ed. I. Scott-Kilvert. New York: Scribner's, 1987. pp. 95, 97

Durrell, Lawrence. *Pied Piper of Lovers*. Ed. by James Gifford. Victoria, CA: ELS Editions, 2008.

Durrell, Lawrence. *From the Elephant's Back*. Ed. by James Gifford. Edmonton, Alberta, CA: University of Alberta Press, 2015.

Durrell, Lawrence. "From the Elephant's Back" (1982) in *From the Elephant's Back*. Ed. by James Gifford. Edmonton, Alberta, CA: University of Alberta Press, 2015. Pp. 1-25.

Ezard, John. "Durrell Fell Foul of Migrant Law". *The Guardian*. 29 April 2002. Online at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2002/apr/29/books.booksnews

Fanchette, Jean. "Lawrence Durrell Answers a Few Questions." Reprinted from *Two Cities*. *Labrys* 5 (1979): 41-44.

Fanchette, Jean. "Lawrence Durrell Answers a Few Questions." *Two Cities* 1 (1959): 25-28.

Gifford, James. "Introduction" to *From the Elephant's Back*. Ed. by James Gifford. Edmonton, Alberta, CA: University of Alberta Press, 2015. Pp. xiii-xxxii.

Ikas, Karin and Gerhard Wagner, eds. *Communicating in the Third Space*. New York and London: Routledge, 2009.



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)

International Lawrence Durrell Society. "Biography". Online at: http://lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/resources/biography/
Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
Macniven, Ian S., ed. *The Durrell-Miller Letters 1935-80*. New York: New Directions, 1988.
Morrison, Ray. *A Smile in His Mind's Eye: A Study of the Early Works of Lawrence Durrell*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.
Pine, Richard. *Lawrence Durrell: The Mindscape*. Basingstroke and London: Macmillan, 1994.
Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
Seyhan, Azade. *Writing Outside the Nation*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001.
Soja, Edward W. "Thirdspace: Toward a New Consciousness of Space and Spatiality" in *Communicating in the Third Space*. Ed. by Karin Ikas and Gerhard Wagner. New York and London: Routledge, 2009. pp. 49-61.
Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.
Young, G. B. and J. Matthews, eds. *Labrys*, no. 5, special 'Lawrence Durrell' issue (1979).



BDD-A30520 © 2019 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.142 (2026-11-15 02:42:09 UTC)